

TWO PESOS for CATALINA



written and illustrated by ANN KIRN

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This is a charming, simply written, easy-to-read story of a Mexican girl who suddenly had two bright silver pesos of her very own. It tells of the song she sings about them and of her trip to market with her mother and father to search for just the right thing on which to spend her money. Discarding one item after another, she at last sees something she *must* have—and, with her father's help, she gets it.

The author writes: "This book was written after I had spent three summer months in Taxco—painting, sketching, and working on jewelry with native silversmiths.

"The aim of the story is to give North American children a glimpse of the people of Mexico—to portray their happy friendly personalities, to tell about the clothes they wear, the work they do, and to share with them a few Mexican names and words. The illustrations are on-the-spot sketches of people and places. In them I have tried to express the sunlight and sparkle of Mexico with bright Mexican colors—magenta, pink, and warm burnt sienna. One of the little girls who enjoyed being sketched was named Catalina."

In the course of her story, Miss Kirn succeeds in fulfilling her purpose. She has given her readers a delightful picture of Mexican people—young and old—and of Mexican life.

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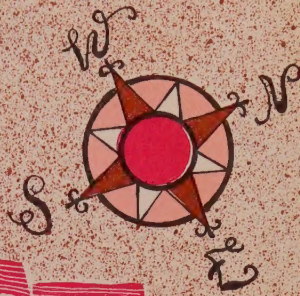


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TAXCO



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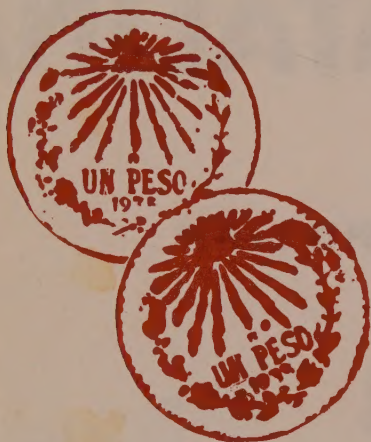
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To Ellen and Cliff



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Catalina was singing, singing happily,
“Two pesos for Catalina.
Two pesos for Catalina to spend.”



Catalina stood looking at the silver dollars. Her friends gathered round her to admire them.

Catalina and her friends lived in a village near Taxco down in old Mexico. None of them had ever had two whole pesos to spend.

“Where did you get two pesos, Catalina?” asked Rosita.



“A Tourist Lady gave them to me,”
answered Catalina.

“She found a bracelet the Tourist Lady
lost,” said her brother, Eduardo.

“And the Lady said,
‘Two pesos for Catalina.

Two pesos for Catalina to spend,’” sang
Catalina.



That evening Catalina's father came home from working in the corn field.

Catalina sat on his knee. She told him about the two round silver pesos she had in her clay pig bank.

"And what, my little bug, are you going to buy with two beautiful pesos?" asked Father.

Catalina said, "What do you want me to buy, Father?"

"You found the bracelet for the Lady, so the pesos are all yours. You may spend them for anything you want," answered Father.

Catalina couldn't think of anything wonderful enough to cost two silver pesos. And until it was time to go to bed, she sang,

"Two pesos for Catalina.

Two pesos for Catalina to spend."

The next morning Mother called, "Get up, Catalina, get up. Today we go to market in Taxco. You may go with Father and me to buy something with your two pesos."

Catalina jumped up. "Eduardo, are you going too?" she asked.

"No. I'm going to stay at home and feed the chickens," answered Eduardo. "Here is your pig bank. Can you shake out the pesos?"

Catalina shook her bank. Out rolled the two silver pesos!

"It's a long walk to Taxco," said Father. "Shall I carry the pesos to market for you?"

"Yes, you keep them for me, Father. I might lose them," answered Catalina.



Eduardo and Catalina's friends, who were not going to market, came to wave good-bye. They called after her.

"Buy some black clay whistles at the market, Catalina," shouted Rosita.

"No, no, no," cried Romero. "Buy a little burro for us to ride."





“Buy lots of candies and cakes,”
shouted Eduardo and Pedro, who were
always thinking of things to eat.

But Catalina didn’t answer. She smiled
and off she trotted.



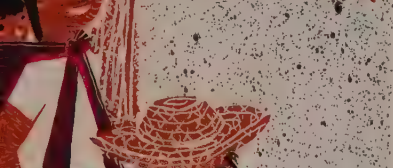


Catalina ran up the hill to catch up
with Father, Mother, and the Baby.



Many farmers were going
to market.

Some farmers carried
baskets of vegetables, fruits,
or flowers.



Others drove burros loaded with bags
of beans and corn.

A boy was taking his pig to market on
a leash.



Catalina was singing, singing happily,
“Two pesos for Catalina.
Two pesos for Catalina to spend.”
The farmers smiled.



One farmer asked, "What are you going to buy at the market, little one? How are you going to spend your two pesos?"

Catalina didn't answer. She just kept on singing.



Father, Mother, and Catalina walked on and on. Suddenly they saw Taxco perched on the mountain side.

Up, up its cobblestoned streets they climbed. They passed women washing at the washing well.





They passed the big church.
They passed pink and white houses.



Catalina stopped to watch the farmers
unload their burros.



Again she had to run to catch up with
Father, Mother, and the Baby.

The family stood in the street above the market place.

“Look, look, Catalina! There is the market,” said Father. “Now you can spend your two beautiful pesos!”



Catalina laughed and sang,
“Two pesos for Catalina.
Two pesos for Catalina to spend.”



Father said, "I am going to the plaza to talk with the men sitting on the benches."

He called back to Catalina, "Come for your two pesos, my little bug, as soon as you find what you want to buy."

Catalina walked on to the market place with Mother and the Baby. Sheets were stretched above the market for shade.

They sat down in the cool shade of a sheet. Then she helped Mother stack the juicy mangos for sale.

"Catalina," said Mother, "go and look around the market. You may see something you want to buy."

Away she skipped singing,

"Two pesos for Catalina.

Two pesos for Catalina to spend."



She skipped to the flower market. She saw big flowers and little flowers. She saw pink, red, and white flowers.

“Two pesos for flowers?” Catalina asked herself. “No, I can’t spend my shiny silver pesos for flowers. They will fade and die.”





Catalina ran to the food market.

Farmers were selling milk, chili peppers,
and beans. A boy was carrying a basket of
buns on his head.



Catalina watched a little girl help her mother cook Mexican pancakes.

“Those tortillas smell good,” Catalina said to herself. “But I mustn’t spend any of my two pesos for tortillas.”



Then she saw a boy and his father making ice cream.

“Ice cream tastes so good, maybe I should buy some,” thought Catalina.

But then she thought, “No, I can’t spend my pesos for something to eat. I want something to keep.”





Catalina spied a black chair with white flowers painted on it.

She ran over to the chair and sat down.



“This chair is just the right size for me!” she shouted. “This chair is beautiful! But it is not as beautiful as my two round silver pesos!”



Catalina ran to the pottery market. She saw many clay jars and bowls.

She saw clay toys—brown clay horses and cows; clay pig banks, like hers at home; and black clay whistles, the kind Rosita wanted.

She blew one of the whistles, “Toot-a-toot-toot!”

“Clay toys are fun to play with,” she said. “I could buy many toys with my two pesos, but they break.”





Catalina cried, “I have two silver pesos to spend, but I can’t find anything I want to buy!”

She trudged out of the market place and climbed up a cobblestoned street.

A little girl was sitting on a bench eating a slice of melon.

Catalina looked at the little girl.

Her eyes opened wide! Now she knew what she wanted to buy with her two shiny round pesos!



Catalina ran up the street to the plaza. She had to find Father! She had to get her two pesos!

It was siesta time and all the fathers were napping.



Their big sombreros were pulled down over their eyes.

Catalina ran from one big hat to another. She peeped up under each hat, looking for Father.

At last she found him. She tugged at his serape.

“What is it, Catalina?” asked Father. “Do you want your two pesos? Have you found what you want to buy?”

“Oh yes, yes!” shouted Catalina. “Shoes! Shoes! Beautiful shoes!”





Catalina had never worn a pair of shoes. Her friends in the village had never worn shoes. Her mother seldom wore shoes. Only Father had the pesos to spend for shoes.

Catalina was so happy, she jumped up and down.

“Shoes!” said Father. “Well, if that’s what you want, I will go with you. We will buy some beautiful shoes.”

He took her hand and away they went.



They walked back to the market place.

A woman was making shoes. She cut the soles from old rubber tires. Then she laced leather straps through the soles. She made many shoes for sale.

Father said, "I'll pick out some fine leather straps for your shoes, little bug."

But Catalina began to cry.



“What is it? What is the matter?” asked Father.

“I don’t want shoes with many straps. I want beautiful shiny black shoes with just one strap that buttons,” sobbed Catalina.

“These are good shoes. They are the kind all fathers wear,” said Father.

“But they are not shiny or beautiful,” she cried.

“All right, Catalina,” said Father. “We will look in the shoe shops. Maybe we will find shoes that are black and shiny and beautiful.”

They went into one of the shops. On the center shelf were two shiny black shoes with straps that buttoned! The shopkeeper slipped the shoes on Catalina’s feet.

“Ah, little one, these shoes just fit!” he said.

Catalina grinned. She wiggled her toes in the beautiful shoes!

Father said, “Give your two pesos to the shopkeeper, little bug.”

Catalina gave the shopkeeper the two silver pesos for the two shiny black shoes!



“Here are some centavos, little one,” said the shopkeeper. “You can buy some candies for yourself.”

“And for Eduardo and Pedro and all my friends!” shouted Catalina. “Oh thank you!”

How proud Catalina was of her first pair of shoes! She and Father hurried to show them to Mother.

“Catalina, those are the most beautiful shoes I have ever seen!” said Mother.

“Go buy the candies, Catalina,” said Father. “Then we must start home.”

Catalina ran to the food market and bought some candy. She put it in her basket.



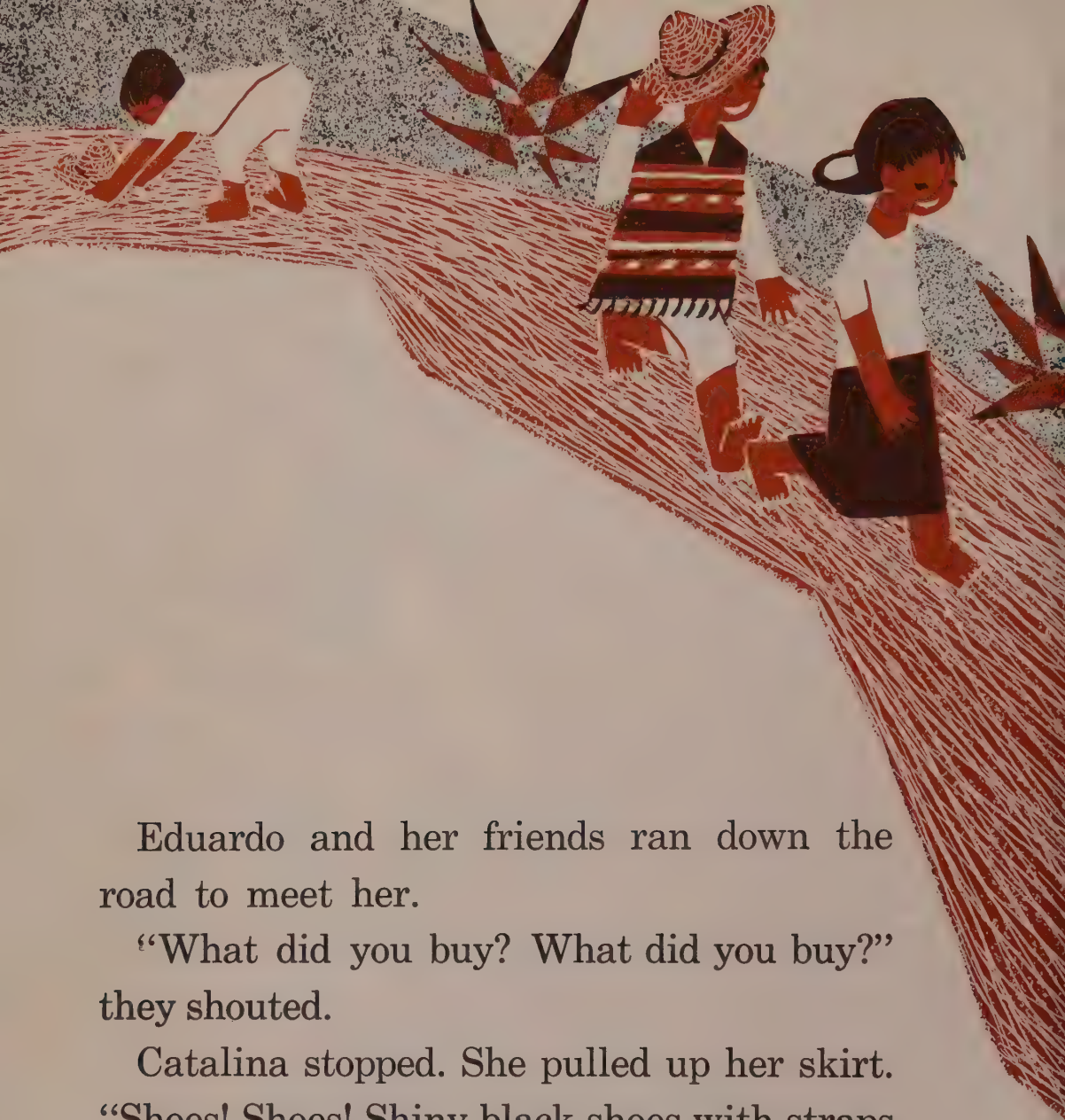




Catalina stepped very carefully all the long way home. But dust kept getting on the new shoes.

Many times Catalina stopped and wiped off her shoes with the end of her rebozo.

Then she ran to catch up with Father, Mother, and the Baby.



Eduardo and her friends ran down the road to meet her.

“What did you buy? What did you buy?” they shouted.

Catalina stopped. She pulled up her skirt. “Shoes! Shoes! Shiny black shoes with straps that button!”

“Oh!” cried Eduardo and her friends. “How beautiful they are!”

“And look in my basket,” Catalina said, laughing. “I brought home some candies for everyone!”



Catalina gave Eduardo, Pedro, and all her friends some candy. And they walked the rest of the way home with her.

That night she sang softly,

“Two pesos for shoes.

Two pesos for beautiful shiny black shoes.”



Look and see how you should say these
Mexican names:

Catalina Cat a *lee* nah

Taxco *Tahs* coh

Rosita Roh *zee* tah

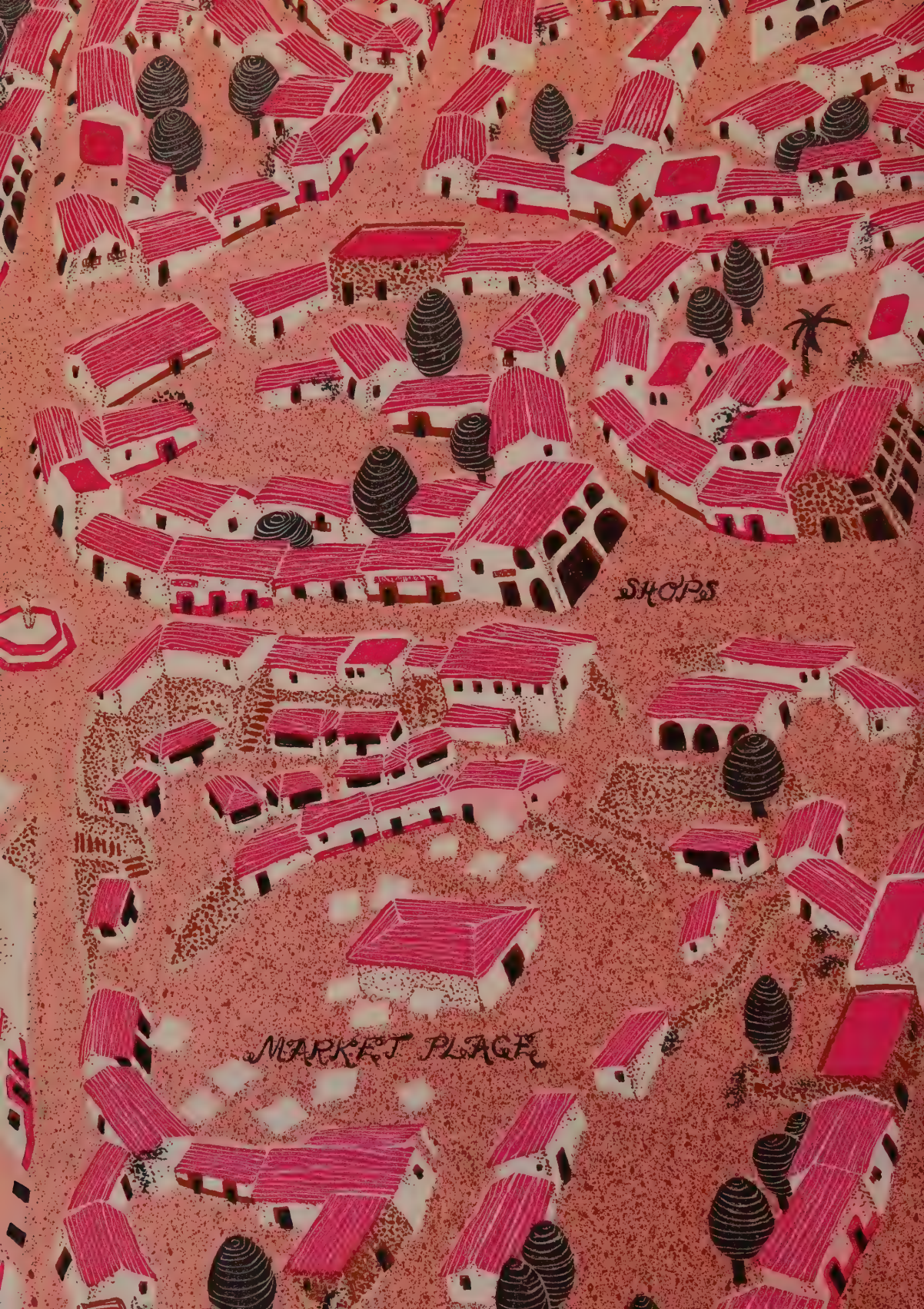
Eduardo Ed *war* doh

Romero Roh *may* roh

Pedro *Pay* droh

Look and see how to say these Mexican words and what they mean:

pesos	<i>pay</i>	sohs	dollars
burro	<i>bur</i>	oh	donkey
plaza	<i>plah</i>	zah	park
mangos	<i>man</i>	gohs	fruit
tortillas	tor <i>tee</i>	yahs	pancakes
chili	<i>chill</i>	ee	red hot
siesta	see <i>es</i>	tah	nap
sombreros	sahm <i>bray</i>	rohs	big hats
serape	say <i>rah</i>	pay	blanket
centavos	sen <i>tah</i>	vohs	pennies
rebozo	ray <i>boh</i>	soh	shawl



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ANN KIRN was born in Missouri. She decided early that she wanted to do fashion illustrations and, after graduating from Junior College, attended professional art schools in Chicago, St. Louis, and Los Angeles.

While working as a fashion illustrator, a friend asked her to do the pictures for a children's book, and she became interested in that field of art. But the paper shortage during the war years kept her from going on with it and, instead, she taught in the elementary school of her home town for five years. This aroused in her a desire to teach art.

Then Miss Kirn went to Columbia University, received her Master of Arts degree, and now teaches in the Fine Arts Department of the Florida State University in Tallahassee.

Writing and illustrating children's books has now become a hobby for her (she has had several successful books published), along with collecting—"anything and everything," she says.

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